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which has not been handled before in a separate and methodical form, although it holds a conspicuous place in the early history of our government. To reconcile the contending claims of the states to the unappropriated territory, and to satisfy the demands and expectations of each, was among the most embarrassing tasks, which the general Congress was called to execute. By great prudence and good management, however, an amicable adjustment of all difficulties was gradually brought about, the states relinquished their claims, whether real or imaginary, and the sovereignty over all the new territories was ceded to the government of the United States. A concise history of the events leading to these results is the aim of Mr Blunt in the present work.

In an introductory chapter, the author takes a brief view of the original right of Europeans to parts of the American continent, or of the foundation of their claims. He goes back to the papal grants, and then considers in historical order the claims founded on actual possession, prior discovery, charters, conquest, and purchases of the Indians. He dissects the old charters, and shows how extremely vague they were in defining boundaries. In truth, at the time they were given, the ignorance of the geography of this country was such, as to render it impossible to define the limits of any extensive territory. Hence, for the want of any known marks, the *South Sea* was made the charter boundary of several of the provinces on the west. This looseness in fixing boundaries caused an interference among the grants, and in the end produced some of the most serious obstacles to the formation of the confederacy. Mr Blunt has pursued the subject through all its windings. The point will be found pretty largely discussed also, in a former number of this Journal. [*Vol. XIII. p. 313 et seq. for Oct. 1821.*] Paine's treatise, entitled 'Public Good,' first published in 1780, and relating particularly to the Virginia claims, exhibits the merits of the case in a very strong light.

Mr. Blunt has rendered a valuable service to the public, in collecting into one body so many historical facts bearing on the same point. This work will greatly facilitate future inquiries; it is executed with apparent fidelity, and patient examination of authentic materials; the style is clear, and the arrangement judicious.

10.—1. *Manifestacion del Ciudadano Manuel de Mier y Terán al Publico.* 4to. pp. 31. Mexico. 1825.

2. *Segunda Manifestacion del Ciudadano Manuel de Mier y Terán.* 4to. pp. 127. Mexico. 1825.

ALTHOUGH these pamphlets are of a controversial nature, they are not without value as historical records. The author, who has

been an officer of high standing in the Mexican army, during the greater part of the revolution, is induced, by circumstances which do not fully appear, to come before the public in vindication of himself from certain charges, which had been advanced against him in relation to his public career. In prosecuting his defence, it becomes necessary for him to recur to many events, particularly in the first stages of the revolution, in which he took an active part. The nature of the subject requires the author to speak perpetually of himself, but it is usually with becoming moderation, and with an apparent candor, which inspire confidence in his statements. It is his purpose, of course, to make his own cause good, but there is no obvious reason for supposing this aim to have turned him aside from an accurate narrative of events, and exposition of facts. In short, amidst the paucity of materials illustrating the revolutionary history of Mexico, these pamphlets may be consulted with profit by such persons, as seek for knowledge on that subject.

It is gratifying to learn, both from passing occurrences, and the late message of the President of the Mexican states, that the government under the new constitution is going into steady and substantial operation, gaining strength from the cheerful support of the people, and the wise administration of the rulers. The experiment of the Federal system seems thus far to have been tried with triumphant success. The states have instituted assemblies, or legislatures, and some of them at least have formed and adopted constitutions. The business of legislation is going on, to all appearance harmoniously and judiciously.

In fact there never was but one reason, or even shadow of a reason, why the *Central* scheme could be imagined to have any preference over the *Federal*, in forming the new government of Mexico. As it regards the intrinsic merit of the two systems, it would seem impossible for any one to suppose for a moment, that the former could approach in any degree to the latter. The simple question was, whether the provinces were in a condition to govern themselves as independent states. Upon this question it was natural, that there should be a difference of opinion, especially after the years of political commotion which had preceded. The example of Colombia, also, would be likely to have some weight in the scale. That government was prospering under the Central system, and hence there might seem greater security, if not a prospect of greater ultimate success, by following in the same track. The abortive attempts of Venezuela and Buenos Ayres to establish the Federative plan, moreover, were no encouraging precedents. But the result has proved, that the circumstances of the cases were not similar, that Mexico had fewer internal diffi-

culties to encounter than those countries, when they endeavored to set up the same form of government, and that the people had improved more by the experience of the revolution. And even when Colombia adopted her Central constitution, she was pressed hard by a foreign foe, and seemed to feel no want more sensibly, than a union of all hearts and hands in the great cause, and the concentration of a power, which could wield the whole mass, and bring the energies of all the parts to act on a single point.

This end was attained ; but as things have turned out, it may be questioned whether Colombia would not have prospered equally well, or better, at the outset under the Federative system ; and, if so, the future gain would have been incalculable. It is quite certain the time will come, when the growing intelligence of the people will demand a change in the present organization, and call for a form of government more republican in its principles, and better suited to the existence and prosperity of free institutions. To this point we doubt not the statesmen of Colombia are expecting to be drawn in due time. But who does not see, that every year is throwing obstacles in the way ? A system is now taking root, which must be in a measure eradicated, before another can be planted in its stead ; whereas, had a scion from the genuine stock been first cherished, every hour would have added to its growth and strength. The progress of the country will be doubly retarded by the defects of the present constitution, and by the important changes, which a new one will occasion when introduced. This is said, not in disparagement of the wisdom or motives of the leaders in Colombia, for pursuing the safer course, but as showing the ultimate disadvantages of the scheme, however well it may have answered the purpose of a temporary government.

The Constituent Assembly in Mexico, which decided on the present form of government, was divided into two parties, one called the *central*, and the other the *federal* party. All the higher orders of the clergy, the nobles, and some of the leading officers of the army, were *Centralists*, while the representatives from the provinces were generally *Federalists*. These latter prevailed, very fortunately, as the result has proved, and a government was established, closely resembling that of the United States. It is said, that even Victoria and Bravo were *Centralists*.

It is obvious from this disposition of the parties, that the Central system in Mexico would have soon put on the garb of a complete aristocracy, that the power would have been kept in a few hands, and the spirit of a truly republican government virtually annihilated. The voice of the people would have been but feebly uttered and rarely heard. At present, however, a very different

process is going on. The inhabitants of the provinces are waked up to a sense of their political existence and consequence ; the right of suffrage is understood, and valued, and exercised ; the recurrence of elections brings up the merits of men and of measures for examination ; representatives assemble to legislate, and acquire new light by mutual discussions of important topics. A portion of this light is diffused among the people, and is already producing most salutary effects. It will increase till it enlightens and animates every corner of the country. Nor will its effects be merely local ; the gain in one part will be felt in another, the example and progress of one province will stimulate others, and by this advancement and reaction of intelligence, and the fruits of experience, the foundation of the best form of government will gradually be laid, which will stand firm against the shock of any future accidents.

From the official documents, and public papers in Mexico, nothing is clearer, than that a strong European interest exists there, somewhat to the prejudice of this country. Considering the loans, which the government has obtained from England, and the great amount of capital from that country now employed in the mining business, this bias may doubtless be referred to a natural source. How far it will operate to our disadvantage, in the commercial relations between the United States and Mexico, we shall not predict. On this subject, however, there needs be no uneasiness, while our affairs in Mexico are in the hands of a gentleman so thoroughly qualified to manage them, and who possesses so entirely the confidence of the country, as Mr Poinsett, our present Minister Plenipotentiary.

In connexion with these remarks, we cannot forbear to express the pleasure with which we are enabled to state, from undoubted authority, that the first volume of Mr Restrepo's *History of Colombia* is already completed, and sent to London for publication, both in the Spanish and English languages. It is intended to be printed also in this country. Mr Restrepo is known as the able and indefatigable Secretary of State for the Home Department in Colombia, and no man living probably has enjoyed opportunities so favorable, for becoming acquainted with the history of that republic. From the talents and qualifications of the author, as well as from the importance of his subject, this work may justly be looked for with raised expectations. Mr Restrepo is pursuing his task with as much expedition, as his numerous and weighty public duties will allow, but it is uncertain when the second volume will be in preparation.
